Thematic Forum of Global Digital Economy Conference 2023
on "Building Smart Cities in a Changing World" was held at Peking University

On the morning of July 6, the Global Digital Economy Conference 2023 thematic forum on "Building Smart Cities in a Changing World" was held at Yenching Academy of Peking University. Approved by the State Council and co-hosted by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the Ministry of Commerce, the Cyberspace Administration of China, the China Association for Science and Technology, and the People's Government of Beijing Municipality, the Global Digital Economy Conference is one of the highest-level digital economy conferences in China.

The thematic forum kicked off with remarks by Prof. Shigong Jiang, Peking University's Social Sciences Department head, Mr. Xuehai Peng, deputy director of the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology, and Prof. Shiqi Tang, Dean of the School of International Studies of Peking University. Subsequently, Mr. Djoomart Otorbaev, former Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan, Prof. Hongjun Yu, Deputy Director of Peking University Council, Mr. Nabil Fahmy, former Foreign Minister of Egypt, and Mr. Danny Alexander, Vice President of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), delivered keynote speeches online and offline respectively.

Release of *2023 Asia Smart City Ranking* and *2023 The Group of Twenty (G20) Smart City Ranking*

Dr. Xi Chen is the author of *Asia Smart City Ranking* and *The Group of Twenty (G20) Smart City Ranking*. He presented the final results on behalf of the reports' publisher, Harbor Overseas, and the co-publisher, Institute for Global Cooperation and Understanding (iGCU) at Peking University. It took more than half a year to complete the reports. A total of 243 cities (144 from Asia, 184 from G20, and 85 reused in both rankings above) were evaluated. A total of 16 indicators, in traditional, digital, and institutional infrastructure, were weighted by 32 global policymakers and first-class experts. The report conducted evidence verification on tens of thousands of data sources in 21 languages.

In the G20 rankings, Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Chongqing, as well as international cities such as London, Berlin, New York, Helsinki, Hamburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Moscow, San Francisco, Munich, Paris, Lyons Milan and Washington are in the top 10%.

In the ranking of individual Asian cities, Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Chongqing and Hong Kong, as well as Asian cities such as Singapore, Tokyo, Seoul and Yokohama are ranked in the top 10%.

Global Change as a Context for Comparative Study on Smart City Clusters

The report holds that super-globalization will be reorganized in new forms. From the Mediterranean to the Pacific, global economies are actively seeking economic regionalization and military bloc solutions, such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the Asian NATO, the Australia-UK-US Alliance (AUKUS), the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue,

and the Five Eyes Alliance. Also, international organizations associated with China are expanding, such as the BRICS, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

In order to adapt to the process of re-globalization, many experts from different countries have introduced various theoretical proposals, yet it is still urgent to develop more systematic, practical and innovative strategies globally (including China). Therefore, *2023 Asia Smart City Ranking* and *2023 The Group of Twenty (G20) Smart City Ranking* are released at the right moment.

In a narrow sense, "smart city" orients to information and communication technologies, but this is incomplete. In a broader sense, "smart city" is the integration of urban business, information technology, and governance mechanisms. Based on the broad concept, this ranking with regional integration orientation will lead development strategies of smart cities in Asia's developing economies, and foster the integration of cross-regional economic and security system. The benefits of this idea are clear and include: (1) cooperation among cities or city clusters is more operable than cooperation among countries; (2) cooperation among coastal, marginal, or continental hinterland city clusters will create a digital in-depth area that goes beyond geographic depth, allowing economies to shift their focus from geopolitics to geoeconomics. Moreover, the synergy of diverse infrastructure, including traditional, digital and institutional infrastructure, will enhance the resilience of city clusters and mitigate risks incurred by unexpected events such as climate change, pandemics or social unrest; (3) this idea promotes cross-regional people-to-people exchanges and the formation of cultural consensus.

The development level of smart city clusters is presented globally for the first time

Based on the ranking, Dr. Xi Chen conducted the world's first comparative study on the development level of smart city clusters and presented the results on site. His research objects include coastal smart city clusters such as the North Sea and Baltic Sea in Europe, the New York Bay Area and the Great Lakes region in the U.S., the three major bays (Tokyo Bay, Ise Bay, and Osaka Bay) in Japan, the Yangtze River Delta and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in China, and the Persian Gulf in the Middle East. In addition, the ranking has also presented development level of the Alps and Carpathians-Balkans in Europe, the Rocky Mountains in the U.S., and the Asian inland city clusters that stretch from Xi'an-Urumqi/Kashgar in China to Central Asia and the Iranian plateau.

The results found that the North Sea and Baltic Sea in Europe, and the New York Bay Area and Great Lakes region in the U.S. lead the world in terms of total score as well as traditional infrastructure and digital infrastructure subscales. Surprisingly, the Yangtze River Delta, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and Japan's three major bays are not in the top tier of global smart city clusters. Although Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Hong Kong show global competitive advantages, especially in digital government and wired communications, the average score is pulled down after the inclusion of many second and third-tier cities in the Yangtze River Delta and Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

The Carpathian-Balkan Mountains, the Rocky Mountains, and the Asian inland areas all lag behind the coastal regions of the same continents. The Alps are an exception, with smart

city clusters along their route developing at a level similar to the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. This is due to the fact that the Alpine urban cluster excels in wireless communication networks, cross-regional rail transportation and encouraging the rational flow of data.

The Persian Gulf possesses great potential. In this ranking, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Riyadh and Doha are in the second and third global squares, which is similar to Amsterdam in the Netherlands, Boston in the United States, Osaka in Japan, or Foshan in China. If the Persian Gulf cities continue to upgrade their traditional and digital infrastructure and keep their institutions open, the gap with the global first square will be closed.

Leading experts and scholars discuss the core challenges of global development

After the release of the reports, Dr. Xi Chen, the founder of Harbor Overseas, Professor Dong Wang, Executive Director of the Institute for Global Cooperation and Understanding (iGCU) at Peking University, and Professor Geng Xiao, Chairman of the Hong Kong Institution for International Finance presided over the discussions of "Smart City and Regional Integration", "International Relations and Regional Integration", and "International Finance, Global Governance, and Regional Integration" respectively. These three topics cover the core challenges of global change.

The distinguished guests participating in the forum include Ambassador of Croatia, Mr. Dario Mihelin, Minister Counselor of Malaysia, Mr. Sanmugan Subramaniam, and diplomats of other countries to China from Turkey, Pakistan, Mexico, Turkey, Ireland and the Delegation of the European Union to China, as well as leaders or chief engineers of central enterprises such as China Communications Construction, POWERCHINA, and China Railway Construction, international relations and international finance experts from Peking University, Tsinghua University, Beijing Normal University, Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen), Columbia University, and other key universities at home and abroad. Representatives from Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology, Beijing Municipal Commission of Development and Reform, Beijing Municipal Forestry and Parks Bureau, as well as the Export-Import Bank of China and China-Africa Development Fund participated in the forum offline and communicate conversed with each other.

Arabic version: http://arabic.china.org.cn/txt/2023-07/07/content_91668604.htm
English version: http://t.m.china.org.cn/convert/c_pEjNvp0I.html
Chinese version:
https://ishare.ifeng.com/c/s/v006NIY--c1RPWFmcAYogmBbzr5dEyHdh02G61udFUBz0O EeD7rncxNKGDocLA6ErVVVTUAQ9dP1HExkwBMVtPXAPjQ_____?spss=np&channelId=&aman =deGf66jda3Q78906daU28fY444045bt3c4z6a8q857&gud=08B551p128